



Extension

If the Branch line was extended north, it could provide passenger service to the communities of Brookfield and New Milford where there currently is no passenger service.

Electrification

As outlined in Lets Go CT! electrification is a long term goal for CTDOT. This enhancement to the Branch line would include upgrading all of the rail infrastructure, and converting the diesel-powered trains to electric powered trains.

The Maybrook Line

CTDOT is also exploring options for improving freight rail service in Connecticut by improving the Maybrook Line and its connection to the Danbury Branch. The Maybrook Line consists of 27 miles in Connecticut and connects the Danbury Branch Line to the Waterbury Branch Line. The Maybrook Line passes through Danbury, Newtown, Monroe and Derby. It is owned by the Housatonic Railroad and is not currently operational. If the infrastructure was restored, it would provide an opportunity for the freight traffic currently running on the Danbury Branch Line to be re-routed and would offer freight providers additional flexibility.

- Danbury Branch Connection
- Newtown
- Monroe
- Derby, Waterbury Branch Connection

For more information please visit us on the Web!

<http://www.danburybranchstudy.com/index.html>

Connecticut..... On The Move!

Danbury Branch

Report

Transforming Transportation in Connecticut

LET'S GO CT!

Let's GO CT represents a 30-year vision for Connecticut's best in class transportation system. Let's GO CT outlined the investments needed now to make our transportation system safer, more reliable, and more responsive to our 21st century lifestyles and tremendous economic opportunities.

These investments are outline in two documents the 5-year ramp-up and 30 year vision plan. All projects mentioned with in this brochure can be found within the Lets Go CT Program.

<http://letsgoct.com>



Inside

Overview **P.1**

Completed and Anticipated Projects **P.2**

Laying the Ground work for the Future **P.3**

Opportunities for the Future **P.4**

Overview

The Danbury Branch Report was created to address the service needs of the traveling public in the Western Connecticut region. The Danbury Branch line is owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT).

The Branch Line is approximately 24 miles long, running through eight municipalities from South Norwalk to Danbury and carries about 1,200 riders a day.

The Line consists of a single track system that currently accommodates freight service run by Providence & Worcester Railroad and passenger service provided by Metro North.

The rail line north of Danbury that runs to New Milford is an active freight line owned and operated by the Housatonic Railroad. This section of rail currently provides freight service only.

CTDOT has undertaken several projects to improve passenger service in the corridor. This document highlights completed projects as well as future initiatives.



Transportation Related Needs on the Danbury Branch Line



- ⇒ To maintain and improve existing commuter rail service on the Danbury Branch Line
- ⇒ Improve Bus service along the Danbury Branch Line corridor
- ⇒ To reduce vehicular congestion in the Route 7 corridor
- ⇒ Improve transit mobility along the corridor
- ⇒ Enhance economic development and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities in conjunction with municipalities



Recent Achievements and Anticipated Projects

Transportation Signal System.

Over the past several years, the Department has undertaken many projects to improve service to its customers riding the branch line. The most notable was to signalize the branch line.

The total cost of construction for this project was \$72.5 million. This included not only signalization, but the addition of a siding in the Town of Bethel and centralized train control (CTC). CTC is an **enhanced safety system** that allows the dispatcher to safely control and optimize train movements. These achievements allowed the Department to increase train service on the branch line and **add six trains** to the daily schedule. The increased service resulted in a 9% increase in ridership in 2015.

Positive Train Control (PTC)

The Department is committed to implementing Positive Train Control, which is an advanced train safety system. PTC is a highly effective safety system that monitors train movements in a corridor, and prevents conflicting train movements. It can control train movement and speed. The project is expected to be completed in 2018.

Merritt 7 Station Enhancements



Conceptual drawing of the pedestrian up and over at the Merritt 7 Station

The Merritt 7 station is one of seven commuter rail stations on the Danbury Branch Line. In the summer of 2015, the Department concluded the conceptual planning phase of this project to enhance the safety, accessibility, operational efficiency, and opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The enhancements include the replacement of the existing low-level platform with new 510-foot high-level platforms on **each side** of the tracks plus and up-and-over pedestrian bridge. This will allow passengers to access the station from the Merritt 7 office complex on the east side, which was not possible with the single existing low-level platform on the west side. The improvement will also include an extended canopy, real time train capabilities, and ticket vending machines

among other amenities. Final Design of the project will begin in early 2016 and should take approximately a year to complete. This project will allow Norwalk to fully realize the TOD potential of the station.

Bethel Station Parking Expansion

The Department is currently designing a parking expansion at the Bethel Train station. This expansion will accommodate 121 new spaces for a total of 320 spaces. Construction will be completed in the summer of 2017. Parking will also be expanded for cyclists. The Department has been working with the Town of Bethel who will be purchasing bike lockers to be installed at the station.



Danbury Dock Yard

The Danbury Dock Yard project is located at the base of the Danbury Branch line in the South Norwalk Station, where it connects to the New Haven Line. The project at this important junction will allow more efficient train operations and improve service for both the Danbury Branch and the New Haven line.

The project includes adding rail sidings, signal improvements, and electrification at the southern end of the Danbury Branch Line. In the short term, these additions will improve the efficiency of train operations. Cost for the project is roughly \$30 million. The project is being accelerated for completion prior to the commencement of the Walk Bridge reconstruction

Laying the Ground work for the Future!

Transit Oriented Development

The State of Connecticut and CTDOT have taken steps to encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along transit lines throughout the state. TOD is mixed-use development centered around transit stations. The Danbury Branch Line Study also explored TOD concepts around all the stations. In 2011 and 2014 the State of Connecticut - Office of Policy and Management provided \$5 million dollars for the planning and facilitation of TOD projects around the state. Two current TOD studies along the Danbury Line include Branchville and Bethel.

Branchville TOD Study:

The Department is currently working with the Western Connecticut Council of Governments and local officials to develop a station and a TOD plan that serves riders and supports the Town of Ridgefield's efforts to reinforce Branchville's historic role as an important village center. The design will accommodate pedestrians, support local businesses, improve access to the train station, and encourage mixed-use development near the station.

Bethel TOD Study:

Bethel is a quintessential New England town situated in northern Fairfield County. It has an historic but vibrant downtown that is the economic and government center of Bethel. Located just north of downtown is the busiest train station on the Danbury Branch Line. Given its proximity to downtown and the under-developed properties that surrounding it, the Bethel Station is well suited for TOD. The ongoing TOD Study is analyzing ways to encourage transit related development on those properties

Connecticut on the Move!



Replacement of our dynamic diesel Fleet!

The Let's Go CT! Program calls for full replacement of the:

- ⇒ Diesel locomotives
- ⇒ push-pull rail cars

That will serve the Danbury Branch.

New rail cars will improve the customer experience and service reliability.

